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ABSTRACT

This document contains a brief bibliography of peer-reviewed literature, with abstracts, on adult children. It is one of 12 bibliographies on aging prepared by the National Agricultural Library for its "Pathfinders" series of publications. Topics covered by the other 11 bibliographies include aging parents, dementia and Alzheimer's disease in the elderly (written for educators), dementia and Alzheimer's disease in the elderly (written for consumers), family caregiving, family support networks, grandparenting, humor in later life, intergenerational relationships, living arrangements in later life, pets and the elderly, and sibling relationships in adulthood. This bibliography on adult children contains citations for 15 books and articles for researchers and educators, and 6 books and articles for consumers. It concludes with a list of organizations that readers may contact for further assistance. (NB)

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FEBRUARY 1990

ADULT CHILDREN

PREPARED BY BILLIE H. FRAZIER, Ph.D., CFLE**

This PATHFINDER has been prepared to help researchers, educators and consumers better understand roles and relationships of adult children with aging parents in today's families.

RESEARCHER/EDUCATOR

"Adult Children's Attachment and Helping Behavior To Elderly Parents: A Path Model," Victor G. Cicirelli. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 5(4):815-825, November 1983.

Based on attachment theory, a path model is constructed. Adult children's feelings of attachment lead to their attachment behaviors, and in turn to their present helping behaviors, and the commitment to provide future help to their elderly parents. Results from adult children and elderly mothers indicate that present helping behaviors, attachment behaviors, and feelings of attachment have the strongest influence on adult children's commitment to provide future help.

"Adult Children's Feelings Toward Their Aging Parents: A Comparative Study Between Anglo and Mexican-American Adult Children," Sandra Lynn Pacheco, Dissertation Abstracts International, 46/5:1410-1411, November 1985.

This research investigates whether Anglo and Mexican-American adult children behave and feel differently toward their aging parents. Results suggest that there are no differences in the way males and females behave and feel toward their mothers and fathers. However, the Mexican-American respondents live closer to their aging parents than Anglo respondents. Ethnic group differences are found in feelings of attachment for fathers, but not for mothers.

CG 022490

This PATHFINDER lists significant resources that are judged to be accurate, readable and available. Opinions expressed in the publication do not reflect views of the United States Department of Agriculture.

The National Agricultural Library is located at Beltsville, Maryland 20705

GPO 907-729

"Aging Parents and Adult Children: Research Themes in Intergenerational Relations," Jay A. Mancici and Rosemary Blieszner. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 51(2):275-290, May 1989.

Dominant themes representing the relationships of older parents and their adult children are discussed. Themes pertaining to roles and responsibilities, parent-child interaction, individual well-being, relationship quality, and caregiving by adult children are discussed within the context of societal age structure changes.

"Aging Parent/Mature Child Relationships," Betsy B. Houser and Sherry L. Berkman. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 46(2):295-299, May 1984.

Personal interviews are conducted to identify factors contributing to mother's satisfaction with filial relationships. Satisfaction with filial relationship is found to be related primarily to satisfaction with quality of contact with children, and secondarily to children's potential filial behavior and mother's satisfaction with quantity of contact with children. This research suggests that perceived inequities in what either the parent or child contribute to the relationship results in dissatisfaction.

The Etiology of Elder Abuse by Adult Offspring, Georgia J. Anetzberger. Springfield, Il: Charles C. Thomas, 1987.

The author undertakes a task of filling a gap in the family violence literature-a study of the etiology of elder abuse in which the perpetrators, the filial caregivers, are the subjects of the study. The small sample size limits the ability to generalize from the findings, but the value of the book is in the questions it raises, not in the questions it answers.

"Factors Relating to the Anxiety Level of Middle-Aged Adult Children in Relationship with Their Aged Parents," Katherine A. Leavitt. Dissertation Abstracts International, 47/2B:816, August 1986.

The purpose of this study is to identify factors which relate to the anxiety level of middle-aged adult children in regard to their relationships with their aged parents. Results indicate that variables significantly related to anxiety include: perceived status of mother's success as a parent, personal feelings about one's own aging, number of times mother was hospitalized, number of times father was hospitalized, subject being only child, expectations that life would change if a parent moved in with the subject, and perceived status of father's physical health.

"How Adult Children Respond to Role Transitions in the Lives of Their Aging Parents," Valerie L. Remnet. Educational Gerontology, 13(4):341-355, 1987.

This study identifies the following parental role transitions: divorce, grandparenthood, retirement, and widowhood. The adult children identify the need for information on communication skills, normal and abnormal aging, and available community resources. Subjects clearly prefer obtaining information through regular meetings of professional organizations and social service clubs, journals and magazines, and public television and radio for ease of fit into their busy schedules.

"Marital Disruption and Adult Children's Perception of Their Siblings' Help to Elderly Parents," Victor G. Cicirelli. Family Relations, 33(4):613-621, October 1984.

In a field study, adult children from maritally disrupted situations and also from intact marriages are asked about their own and their siblings' help to parents. Adult children in maritally disrupted situations give about the same amount of help as siblings, while those with intact marriages give more help than siblings. The rise in the frequency of marital disruption makes well planned sibling-shared helping more important.

"Measuring the Communication of Social Support From Adult Children," Alfred Dean, Bohdan Kolody, and Patricia Wood. Journal of Gerontology, 44(2):S71-S79, March 1989.

This article reports results of an attempt to measure social supports provided by adult children to their elderly parents. The development of this measure and its assessment are designed to address several limitations of existing measures.

"Mid/Late Life Generation Gap: Adult Children With Aging Parents," Jane E. Myers. Journal of Counseling and Development, 66(7):331-335, March 1988.

Family crises such as institutionalization and death can create disruptions in older parent-adult child relationships. Most families manage to adjust. A variety of strategies for families in which hostile and negative feelings threaten the happiness of one or both generations are discussed.

"The Not-So-Empty-Nest: The Return of the Fledgling Adult," Audra W. Clemens and Leland J. Axelson. Family Relations, 34(2):259-264, April 1985.

This study indicates that adult children are returning home in increasing numbers because of unemployment and financial need. More subtle factors such as dependence, protection needs, and parental happiness appear to be involved in long-term stays in the parental household.

"On the Relationships of Adult Daughters to Their Mothers," Rosalind C. Barnett. Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, 21(1):37-72, 1988.

Presented at a scientific meeting of the Boston Society for Gerontologic Psychiatry, this article maintains that the quality of adult daughters' and their mothers' relationship has greater impact on the well-being of the adult child than it has on the elderly parent. The author states that more adequate understanding of the importance of sons as well as daughters' relationships with their elderly mothers is needed because of increased longevity, prevalence of chronic diseases, smaller families and concern about men's nurturance.

"The Presence of Adult Children: A Source of Stress for Elderly Couples' Marriages?," J. Jill Suitor and Karl Pillemer. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 49(4):717-725, November 1987.

In this study, data analysis indicates that the presence of adult children has no effect on elderly parents' marital conflict, even when age, educational attainment, health, and gender are controlled. An analysis of data on respondents sharing a residence with an adult child shows that marital conflict is strongly related to the frequency of parent-child conflict.

"Provision of Care to Old Parents: Division of Responsibility Among Adult Children," S.H. Matthews. Research on Aging, 9(1):45-60, March 1987.

The following contributions can be drawn from this exploratory research: (1) structural characteristics of families affect the way responsibility is divided; (2) affectional solidarity is not related consistently to the division of responsibility for any of the types of help examined; (3) there is no relationship between the way responsibility is divided and perceptions of how adequately either the physical or emotional needs of parents are being met; and (4) the members of the same family do not share perceptions of how responsibility is divided in their families.

"Socially Mobile Daughters and Sons of the Elderly: Mobility Effects within the Family Revisited," Stephen Kulis. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 49(2):421-433, May 1987.

This study examines the effects of intergenerational occupational mobility on relationships between elderly parents and their adult children. One consistent finding is that, with one exception, mobility influences feelings and perceptions but not behavior. Mobility is unrelated to visiting and the level of household assistance provided by children to older parents. The one behavioral exception--the diminished involvement of downwardly mobile sons in social interactions with their parents--may reflect the parents' desire to be or to appear to be less involved with the child. The enhanced affection of downwardly mobile sons for their parents may follow from their attachment to parents for a sense of preserved status in the face of a socioeconomic slide.

How to Care For Your Parents: A Handbook for Adult Children, Nora Jean Levin. Washington, D.C.: Storm King Press, 1987.

This paperback is about energy and attitude on the part of adult children. It covers creating a personal profile, creating a financial file, plugging into networks, taking preventive measurements, securing safety and welfare and looking a housing options. A section is devoted to juggling obligations.

"How to Make Peace with Your Parents," Interview with Harold Bloomfield. U.S. News and World Report, 96(20):47-48, May 21, 1984.

A psychiatrist explains how unresolved negative feelings toward parents can create anger and dissatisfaction with other persons in life. Adult children pay a large price for a poor relationship with parents. The best way to resolve conflicts is to be more receptive and less reactive. It is also essential to resolve guilt over a negative relationship with a deceased parent.

"Living With Adult Children," Billie H. Frazier. College Park, Maryland: The University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service Bulletin 328, 1988-89.

This bulletin focuses on adult children who return to the family home to live. It includes sections on "Who Are Adult Children Living At Home?," "Why Are Adult Children Living at Home," "How Do Nesters and Re-Roosters Affect Elderly Parents?," "What Are the Danger Signals in a Full Nest?," "How Does Nesting and Re-Roosting Affect the Home?," and "What Are Some Positive Strategies for Full Nests?"

"Special Report--Older Drivers and Safety: The Tough Choices," Margaret Opsata, 50 Plus, 32-36, February 1988.

This article is a compassionate look at the issues that arise when an elderly driver must put safety before pride. A course of action available to anyone is to notify the Department of Motor Vehicles that a particular driver is a public hazard. The person will then be called in to take a driving test. This situation can cause a family rift that may be difficult to overcome.

Taking Care Of Your Aging Family Members: A Practical Guide, Nancy R. Hooyman and Wendy Lustbader. New York, NY: The Free Press, 1986.

Theory and practice are blended in this book that is designed to be used by both professionals and families. Many practical tools such as a medical bill accounting sheet, a guide for delegating tasks among family members, a checklist for comparing retirement homes, and a chart for keeping track of progress with rehabilitation exercises are included.

Talking with Your Aging Parents, Mark A. Edinberg. Boston, MASS: Shambhala, 1987.

Topics covered include strategies, skills and support for communicating with older relatives about difficult issues like failing health, legal and financial matters, and family relations.

CONTACT FOR ASSISTANCE

County Cooperative Extension Service (under county government in telephone book)

County, area, or state agency on aging

Family science, education, aging, or psychology department of a state college of university

Local library

American Association of Retired Persons
1909 K. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20049
(202) 872-4700

American Society on Aging
833 Market Street
Suite 516
San Francisco, CA 94130
(415) 543-2617

Commission on Legal Problems of the Elderly
1800 M. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 331-2297

National Council on the Aging, Inc.
600 Maryland Avenue, SW
West Wing 100
Washington, D.C. 20024
(202) 479-1200

Children of Aging Parents
2761 Trenton Road
Levittown, PA 19056
(215) 945-6900

This PATHFINDER resulted from the author's research at the National Agricultural Library while on sabbatical leave from the University of Maryland during the summer and fall of 1989. Using database searches of AGRICOLA, Psycinfo, Social Scisearch, ERIC, Family Resources, and Dissertation Abstracts International, relevant references were reviewed and annotated. It is authored by:

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